

The Boston Globe

Founded 1872

WILLIAM O. TAYLOR, Chairman of the Board and Publisher

THOMAS WINSHIP, Editor

JOHN P. GIUGGIO, President

MARTIN F. NOLAN, Editor, Editorial Page

RICHARD C. OCKERBLOOM, Executive V.P.
DAVID STANGER, Senior V.P., Business Manager
ARTHUR KINGSBURY, V.P., Treasurer
MILLARD G. OWEN, V.P. Marketing & Sales

JOHN S. DRISCOLL, Executive Editor
MATTHEW V. STORIN, Managing Editor, Daily
MICHAEL C. JANEWAY, Managing Editor, Sunday
ROBERT L. HEALY, Associate Editor

ROBERT H. PHELPS, Associate Editor

PUBLISHERS
CHARLES H. TAYLOR, 1873-1922

WILLIAM O. TAYLOR, 1922-1955

WM. DAVIS TAYLOR, 1955-1977

PRESIDENT

JOHN L. TAYLOR, 1963-1975

A thinking man's ICBM

The basic flaw in President's Reagan's defense policy has been the failure to knit weapons procurement and arms control into a coherent whole. High-intensity struggles to build the MX missile, for example, contrast starkly with the Administration's wooden approach to Geneva arms-control talks. **CONSISTENT!**

This is more than a question of keeping priorities in balance. It affects the substance of policy. Missiles and negotiating postures cannot intelligently be planned in isolation.

The fragmentary Reagan approach to national security is obvious seen alongside a national security plan proposed last March by Rep. Albert Gore Jr. (D-Tenn.). Before stating preferences among competing weapons systems and arms-control proposals, Gore posited a "first principle" of defense policy: ending the fear of a first-strike attack. Then he tailored both weapons design and arms-control initiatives to serve that end.

First-strike fear is the right point of departure in the 1980s. The driving force in the arms race today is "counterforce" doctrine and weaponry designed for precise attacks to "disarm" the other side by shooting away its deterrent. This demands ever faster, more accurate, more "flexible" weaponry, of which the MX missile has become a symbol. The result, in Gore's phrase, is a "state of mental siege warfare" with no way out.

To break the cycle, Gore calls for a US-Soviet freeze on the most volatile weaponry: fast-attack missiles. He proposes a "negotiator's pause" which would stop deployment of systems such as the MX and the coming Trident D5 submarine-launched missile, also suitable for surprise attacks. Next would come phased dismantling of the most dangerous existing weapons on both sides, multiple-warhead ICBMs such as the Soviet SS18. **AND MIRV/MIRAS!**

Gore accepts the need to retain single-warhead ICBMs, such as the Soviet SS11 and the US Minuteman 2. Furthermore, because such systems are older, Gore foresees their possible replacement with new single-warhead models. This would permit continued research and development and force "modernization," but would tightly circumscribe it.

If freeze proponents spurn Gore's plan mere-

ly because the freeze he proposes is partial and phased, they will be making a grave mistake. The "deMIRVing" principle zeroes in directly on the primary threat. Those who believe a total, immediate freeze would be better should remember Voltaire's warning: The best is the enemy of the good.

Gore regards force-feeding arms-control policy to an adamantly opposed Administration as an impossible task. He predicts that continuing acrimony over defense policy will produce temporary stalemate between President and Congress, mounting pressures as Soviet arms building continues, and then a renewed surge of US paranoia which sweeps arms control aside. Hence Gore, unlike some critics, tries to bridge the gap between the freeze and the President.

It's not certain how "negotiable" deMIRVing would be because it isn't yet clear how sensitive the Soviets are to the issue of stability. For historical reasons their deterrent is top-heavy with land-based attack missiles, and the arms-building inertia in the Soviet missile "design bureaus" appears to match that of our "military-industrial complex." The negotiability of Gore's approach can't be prejudged. It can only be tested across the table at Geneva.

Those who favor the conservative doctrine of deterrence can support Gore's plan without reservation. Only subscribers to theories of controlled nuclear "warfighting" will be troubled, because the loss of fast-attack missiles would throw a wet blanket over crisis-manipulation scenarios.

Unfortunately, some theorists prominent in this Administration owe recent career successes to nuclear warfighting chic. The greatest barrier to the deMIRVing approach may reside not in the Kremlin but in the strategists who tutor Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger.

Gore's plan can be improved upon, but in its attention both to the theory of arms control and to domestic politics it is realistic and noteworthy. An Administration concerned with the paramount issue, keeping nuclear war from starting, would back away from the MX, seize deMIRVing as its own idea and lay something like Gore's model on the table when arms talks resume at Geneva.

*Refusal (by Gore, too?) to perceive coherent picture of R's actual aims!
(opposed of conflict with Soviets!)